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SUBJECT: BAHAMAS NOMINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE AWARD

REF: STATE 00111471

¶1. The GCOB nominates The Honorable Janet G. Bostwick, former Minister of Justice and Immigration, Attorney-General and Minister of Foreign Affairs, for the International Women of Courage Award.

¶2. Bostwick was born October 20, 1939 in Nassau. She was the first woman to be elected as a Member of Parliament in 1982, and was re-elected in 1987 and 1992. She was the first woman appointed to the Cabinet as Minister of Social Services, National Insurance and Housing 1992-1993. This ministry handled social services, school welfare, rehabilitate welfare services, social development programs, women's affairs, early child care centers, psychiatric and medical social services.

¶3. Bostwick has dedicated her life to the cause of women and was instrumental in improving the social conditions of Bahamian women through agitating for amendments to several pieces of legislation including: The Matrimonial Causes Act (1978); The Affiliation Proceedings Act (1981); The Bar Act (1981); The Female Employees (Grant of Maternity Leave) Act (1988); and The Sexual Offenses and Domestic Violence Act (1991).

¶4. Bostwick began her public service career as a stenographer in The Bahamas Legal Department from 1957-1960. She was promoted to Private Secretary to the Attorney General from 1961-1967. While serving as an Administrative Officer in the same department from 1967-1971 she became an articled law student to the Attorney General and was called to The Bahamas Bar. From 1971-1974 she served variously as Crown Counsel, Magistrate, and Crown Prosecutor before becoming a partner in the law firm of Bostwick and Bostwick in 1975. She served as President of the Bahamas Bar Association from 1980-1981.

¶5. Bostwick entered politics in 1976 and was appointed to the Senate of The Bahamas in 1977. She was first elected to the House of Assembly as an opposition member in 1982. She has also served as President of the Free National Movement Women's Association and President of the International Caribbean Women for Democracy. She serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the Girl's Brigade, and as a Council member of The Bahamas Girl Guides Association. Bostwick has also held positions as Secretary General, Bahamas Public Services Union and past patron, Hope House (Home for unwed mothers).

¶6. A former Minister of Justice and Immigration, Attorney-General and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Bostwick was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in November, 1994. She held the additional portfolio of Attorney-General from November, 1994, to

January 1995, and again from October 1995, to March 1997.

¶7. Mrs. Bostwick's contributions have left an indelible imprint on the political history of The Bahamas and her achievements continue to inspire women throughout the region. Mrs. Bostwick has not yet been notified of the nomination, however the GCOB does not foresee any problem in her traveling to the U.S. in March were she to receive the award.

¶8. Her contact information is Janet Bostwick, 50 George Street, P.O. Box 1605, Nassau, Bahamas, email: bostwick@batelnet.bs, Telephone: 242-322-2038.

¶9. Political Officer Wendy Rejan is the officer at post responsible for the nomination. She can be reached by phone at 242-322-1181 ext. 4510 and by e-mail at RejanWA@state.gov.

AVANT